A

SHORT EXTRACT

FROM

M. NECKER'S PAMPHLET

TO THE

FRENCH NATION,

ON THE

IMPENDING TRIAL

OF THE

K I N G.

IN A

LETTER TO A FRIEND.

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A SHORT EXTRACT, &c.

DEAR SIR,

I TAKE the liberty to ſend you a ſhort extract of M. Necker's Addreſs to the French nation, on the impending trial of their King. Short and rude, I fear, it will appear, conſidering the matter it contains, and the pathetic eloquence with which it is written. But as I am confident it would not be doing juſtice to the writer, was I to attempt to follow him through every period, I have ſelected ſuch paſſages only as materially delineate the ſubject he treats, and deſcribe the feelings of his heart. A few notes of my own I have taken the freedom to add, being convinced that they may in ſome meaſure be neceſſary to elucidate a few paſſages, which otherwiſe might appear obſcure.

Lewis XVI. ſays M. Necker, was the firſt king of the French monarchy ſince the days of Charlemagne, who was anxious to eſtabliſh public liberty upon the moſt ſolid foundations. — The firſt king, in the midſt of an army faithfully attached to him at that time, and in the plenitude of his power, who by his own free will preſcribed bounds to his authority. — The firſt king who called upon his ſubjects to aſſociate with him for that purpoſe, that he might acquire an increaſe of their love and eſteem. — The firſt king, who could cooly and deliberately inveſtigate the prerogatives annexed from time immemorial to his crown; and deſpiſing and reprobating ſuch as were either uſeleſs or adverſe to the public good, voluntarily diveſted himſelf of them. Yet, this is the king, who after having ſuffered every ſpecies of outrage,—after having undergone the moſt galling, the moſt pungent inſults and affronts, now finds himſelf a cloſe priſoner, expoſed to the moſt dreadful and alarming conſequences! Here ſecluded from the world, he hears from time to time the melancholy tale of the depredations made upon his rights and reputation. Here it is that they ſtrip him of his royalty; and

and here it is, that they may poſſibly one day force him to appear like the vileſt of criminals before a ſelf-erected tribunal, rancorouſly prejudiced againſt him."

M. Necker then tells them, that ſuch a tribunal as the * Convention would never have exiſted but for the generoſity of the man they now perſecute. For this liberal and munificent act, ſays he, you conferred on him the glorious title of the Reſtorer o French liberty. A glorious title indeed! which will for ever be recorded in the annals of France, and ought never to be effaced from the memory of Frenchmen. But what will be the emotions and feelings of the reader, after having peruſed in the hiſtoric page the detail of the public and private virtues of this unfortunate monarch, he ſhould in the ſequel perceive, written in characters of blood, a relation of the moſt horrid attempt, and the moſt barbarous ingratitude that ever exiſted? In private, and unobſerved," ſays he, the miſfortunes of forlorn and degraded majeſty are deplored and lamented. Proſcription and death awaits the generous ſoul who

* As a conſequence of the National Aſſembly.

dares to raiſe his voice in favour of his fallen and inſulted ſovereign; whilſt his enemies, in open day, ruin his reputation, abuſe, and calumniate him! Every thing that could poſſibly defame the character, and poiſon the minds of the people againſt this unfortunate monarch, has been induſtriouſly publiſhed and diſtributed amongſt the people. The moſt atrocious invectives have been delivered from the pulpit, and read to the populace in every ſtreet and public ſquare throughout the kingdom.

It poſſibly may be the duty, ſays M. Necker, of a former miniſter to this moſt unfortunate monarch, who for ſeven years together has witneſſed his virtues, his rectitude and benevolence of heart, to ſtand foremoſt in the rank of his advocates. The idea, he exclaims, tranſports me; and with every faculty of my ſoul, I undertake the glorious taſk, although conſcious that my abilities are far inferior to my zeal. But can it be expected, ſays he, that my weak voice will be attended to, when every avenue is ſhut againſt oppreſſed innocence? Can it make itſelf heard in the midſt of paſſionate declamation? Can it penetrate through dark and miſguided policy? — I

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will however hazard the attempt, and make my appeal with a trembling hand, and ſtill more oppreſſive heart, to thoſe generous ſouls who participate in the grief which overwhelms me. — In a note, he ſays, it is very doubtful if, in the preſent ſtate of affairs, I ſhall be able to circulate this feeble defence in favor of the moſt injured of princes. Thoſe who can ſecond my zeal, he adds, will, I hope, aſſiſt me. They have nothing to fear, as I mean not to offend. With profound reſpect for the cauſe I undertake, I hope to obſerve that moderation which the deſire of ſucceſs inſpires me with, and as I touch not upon the political opinions of any one, I flatter myſelf that I ſhall not diſpleaſe either the nation or its repreſentatives.

Your honor, your future reputation, Frenchmen, exclaims M. Necker, is at this critical moment at ſtake. You yourſelves, after having reduced your king, and ſubjugated your captive to your all-powerful decrees, muſt appear before the tribunal of poſterity. You have moreover a previous account to ſettle with your own conſciences, with your own feelings, when nothing will

will remain but dire remorſe,—tardy and ineffectual repentance.

He tells them, that they cannot plead in their juſtification, for this their barbarous and inhuman treatment of their unfortunate king, (by his misfortunes now become the general ſolicitude of all Europe) a few ſcraps of paper, ſuſceptible of various interpretations, [redacted]either in the deſk of his majeſty, or the bureaux of his miniſters. Not from theſe, believe me, will Europe judge. Public, viſible, and notorious documents alone will ſatisfy them.

After all the pains, M. Necker repeats, you have taken to defame and blaſt the character of this much to be lamented monarch, you boaſt that he is to have a fair and impartial trial. You have allowed him counſel to defend his cauſe. But what ſort of juſtice is this, when the cauſe by theſe undue means has been prejudged? Every man, as has been ſaid, is at liberty, nay encouraged to defame him. A word in his favor is inſtant death.

M. Necker then confutes every article exhibited againſt his late unfortunate maſter. The maſſacre on the 10th of Auguſt engages his

his attention in the firſt place. It was impoſſible, he ſays, with the handful of men which were then left for his guard, he ſhould ſuppoſe even a poſſibility of ſucceſs, had he meditated it, againſt ſuch a * multitude of opponents. His Majeſty's conduct, however, on the 20th of the preceding June will afford the beſt explanation of it. On the 10th of Auguſt he was certain that there were other victims to be ſacrificed beſides himſelf, and therefore he ſhowed a ſolicitude and anxiety which he did not on the 20th of June, when he knew that it was only his life that was aimed at. At this period, alarming as it was, he went calmly up to the miſguided people who had broke into the courts of the palace. He ordered all his apartments to be thrown open to them, and exhibited not the leaſt ſymptom of fear, although they inſulted him moſt groſslyt. He was accompanied by his lovely and affectionate ſiſter, the conſtant and faithful attendant of his ſufferings, heedleſs of the horrid yells of a vin-

* 50,000 National troops, beſides an immenſe mob.

† Among other inſults offered to him, they put a red cap upon his head, thus dubbing him, what they call, a Jacobin.

dictive mob, which, for ſeveral hours together ſeemed to menace them with inſtant death. She was even flattered that they miſtook her for the Queen, hoping thereby to ſave the life of that unfortunate princeſs at the expence of her own. Her confidence ſhe placed in heaven. There are her virtues conſigned. There ſhe expects mercy and repoſe; the world therefore cannot hurt her. Is not this affectionate, this heroic attachment to a brother in diſtreſs the greateſt, the moſt incontrovertible teſtimony of his virtues? She, who knew the ſecret emotions of his heart, might in his name have proclaimed, "I always wiſhed to do well, you know it. Announce it to the people, when I am no more."

On this fatal day (the 20th of June) when ſome zealous citizens endeavoured to ſurround him by way of defence, he ſaid to them, "Go, my good friends to the "Queen. She indeed needs protection." Such was his affectionate attention towards a beloved princeſs, whoſe virtues he had witneſſed, and whoſe ſufferings he lamented more than his own. But his very domeſtic happineſs was a crime in the eyes of many; and to puniſh him the more ſeverely,

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the dear partner of his life was to be treated with the utmoſt rigour and ignominy. An innocent * child, unconſcious of its fate, fills up the measure of their woes.

On the 10th of Auguſt, as has been remarked, other † victims, beſides the king and his

* The Dauphin was born in November 1785.

† Theſe were the faithful Swiſs guards. In tracing the cauſe of their proſcription, the real authors of this horrid maſſacre will be developed. The Jacobin party were reſolved to deſtroy the king. But this was not to be ſo eaſily effected, whilſt the 1800 men, which, by a former decree, they had given him for his guard, and the Swiſs regiment remained. To overawe his majeſty they had voted 20,000 volunteers to be ſtationed in Paris. The king ſaw the drift of it, and refuſed his aſſent. Thus baffled for the moment, they pretended that the nation was in danger (though nobody but themſelves ſaw the leaſt appearance of it) and repealed the decree which had ſettled the 1800 men for his guard. They wiſhed to do as much by the Swiſs, but the colonel aſſured them, that by the treaty ſubſiſting between the Cantons and France, they were not permitted to quit the king's perſon. They then called in their truſty friends, the mob, aided by a numerous herd of ragamuffins, called the *Marſellois*, collected from all the ſouthern provinces, and invited for the purpoſes of blood and carnage. Theſe wretches attempted to break into the palace in the night of the 24th of July, but were repulſed by the Swiſs, and thoſe who

 remained

his family were marked for deſtruction. His Majeſty therefore ſent to the Aſſembly to inform

remained faithfully attached to the king's perſon, whoſe deſtruction was from that moment determined upon, as a neceſſary ſtep towards compleating the vile work they had in view. The Aſſembly however ſoon forced the king to ſend away about one half of the Swiſs to their barracks at ſome diſtance from Paris, ſo that he had barely 500 men for his protection. Then the Aſſembly (all of their own procuring) received petitions from all the ſections of Paris, demanding in the moſt peremptory manner the depoſition of the king. They were received with burſts of applauſe. The day before the maſſacre one of the city magiſtrates, not being in the ſecrets of the Aſſembly, informed them that he was fearful ſome dreadful inſurrection would take place, if ſpeedy meaſures were not adopted to prevent it. They coolly thanked him for his attention, took no one ſtep to preſerve the peace of the capital, but paſſed over to the order of the day. Accordingly at midnight the alarm-bell rang, and the drums beat to rouze the rabble from their quarters. One circumſtance however occurred which, if it had been executed, might have prevented the convulſion which ſoon after enſued. Had Petion, the mayor of Paris, who was then in the palace, been detained as a hoſtage, the fury of the people might have been reſtrained. This one fact proves that the Swiſs never intended to put the people at defiance, becauſe in that ſuppoſition they never would have ſuffered him to depart. The Aſſembly were ſenſible of it, and therefore ſent their imperial mandate

to

form them of the approaching danger, and requeſted that a deputation of ſome of the members might attend him in the palace, whoſe preſence might poſſibly reſtrain the impetuoſity of the mob, and conſequently prevent the effuſion of blood. This requeſt however was not attended to.

It is ſaid, adds M. Necker, that the king kept the emigrants in pay, and that he encouraged a foreign army to invade the kingdom. The ſcraps of paper, which they have produced to prove the charge, and to which they have given their own intereſted interpreta-

to him to repair immediately to them. Thus was the king and his party left expoſed to their fate. The horrors of the day then commenced; and to remove the odium from themſelves (which deſervedly has rouſed the indignation of all Europe) the Aſſembly gave out that the Swiſs, at the inſtigation of the king, were the aggreſſors. But, beſides the arguments already adduced, which plainly prove that it was a plot of the Aſſembly itſelf, many other collateral incidents confirm it. The Swiſs had no canon. The firſt diſcharge was of artillery, and not of muſquetry. Vanity, as frequently it happens, got the better of prudence. The aſſailants boaſted every where that they begun the attack. The artillery of the mob was alſo ſerved with ammunition before the attack commenced. Theſe facts are incontrovertible. Many others might be adduced, but theſe ought to ſuffice.

tion, may be confuted by the letters and diſpatches of his own * miniſters at that time to every court of Europe. They uniformly declare to every power, to which theſe letters are addreſſed, the fixed and determined reſolution of the king to ſupport that conſtitution, which he had adopted, and ſworn to maintain. Every ſcrap of paper, which contained any thing that could poſſibly be wreſted to his prejudice has been brought forward, while the pieces which would fully juſtify his Majeſty's conduct, have either been loſt, or ſuppreſſed. "Unfortunate monarch," exclaims M. Necker, "Now they accuſe you of having provoked a war; and not long ſince "they inſtigated the mob to inſult you, be-"cauſe you avoided it. They publiſhed "throughout the whole kingdom that you on-"ly ſuſpended it to give your enemies time to "ſtrengthen and fortify themſelves." That the king ſent ſome relief to the children of his † brother, M. Necker allows. Was it poſſible he could overlook ſuch near relations?

* They have all been murdered, ſays M. Necker. A dead man, you know, tells no tales.

† The Count d'Artois. The elder brotner, Monſieur, has no children.

But

But that he in the leaſt encouraged either his brothers or their aſſociates to diſturb the peace of the nation, he poſitively denies. On the contrary, many other proofs he adduces to ſupport his aſſertion, he appeals to a letter, which the Queen ſhewed him written with her own hand to the Count d'Artois, beſeeching him not to diſturb the peace of the kingdom, by oppoſing a revolution which the nation ſeemed to have at heart. The arrears due to his guards he was bound in honor, he ſays, to make good. But the moment they paſſed the Rhine, his Majeſty held no further communication with them. This, I may add, is clearly proved by M. de Seſe, the king's counſel, at his trial. To ſhew the futility of thoſe charges deduced from ſcraps of paper, I ſhall mention one which M. Necker notices, and upon which they examined her Majeſty. A ſcrap of paper was found in the Queen's deſk, in which were the following words, *A liſt of my* * *acquaintance*, written with her own hand. So it was, ſays the exminiſter, but it was only a copy of what the Empreſs her mother had written to her, and

* Suppoſing them to be perſons who were caballing with her in favor of a counter-revolution.

which

whice ſhe had tranſcribed out of reſpect to her beloved parent. Thoſe perſons, whom the Empreſs mentioned, had formerly been known to her at the court of Vienna; and eſteeming them for their worth and probity, recommended to her daughter to notice them, as they might be ſerviceable to her in a foreign country, and by their advice direct her conduct in the high ſtation ſhe was going to fill.

After confuting every article of accuſation alledged againſt his royal maſter, M. Necker ſays, that whenever he approached him, (and for ſeven whole years he was conſtantly near his perſon) he always found him occupied in reading the beſt books, and making notes upon them for his ſatisfaction and improvement, or peruſing ſuch ſtate papers as were laid before him; that the words which uniformly ſeemed uppermoſt upon his lips were expreſſive of his love for the people, and the deſire of doing them good. "He is," adds M. Necker, "religious without ſuper-"ſtition—his morals are the moſt pure—his "heart the moſt benevolent, and his love for "his country unbounded." He concludes with the following ejaculation. "O gracious "God! watch over, and protect this unfor-"tunate prince; the friend of religion; the

"friend

" friend of virtue; whoſe heart was always
" open to mercy and compaſſion; ſwayed by
" benevolence and humanity. All Europe,
" drowned in tears, on their knees implore it
" of you. Convert the hearts of thoſe who
" perſecute him. Remove the blindneſs and
" infatuation which poſſeſſes them. After a
" ſeries of ſuch ſevere puniſhments, after
" ſuch a multiplicity of victims which have
" been ſacrificed during this unfortunate pe-
" riod, afford us one day of conſolation; that
" day let it be in favor o foppreſſed innocence,
" and the epoch of a great nation's re-adopt-
" ing thoſe generous and benevolent ſenti-
" ments, which alone will make it eſtimable
" in the eyes of this world, and ſecure to it
" true liberty and never-ceaſing glory."

In this prayer, every heart ſuſceptible of pity and commiſeration, every mind fraught with the neceſſity of order and ſubordination in this ſublunary world, will undoubtedly join and ſubſcribe. Your ſuffrage from the benevolence and rectitude of your diſpoſition, I may, without heſitation, add to that of,

DEAR SIR, &c.

Jan. 10, 1793.